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FIRST COMMITTEE
Agenda item 156

RATIONALIZATION OF THE WORK AND REFORM OF THE AGENDA OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

Draft decision proposed by the Chairman

Organization of the work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee)

The General Assembly, taking note of the consultations of the Chairman of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee) on the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly and of the working paper, contained in the annex to the present decision, which was prepared by the Chairman of the First Committee on the basis of those consultations, decides to consider further the question of the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, taking into account, inter alia, the working paper prepared by the Chairman of the First Committee, as well as any other pertinent submissions and views of delegations.

ANNEX

Organization of the work of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee)

Working paper presented by the Chairman

1. The effectiveness of the First Committee should be enhanced by adopting for the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly a programme of work that takes into account the thematic approach set out in paragraph 2 of resolution 48/87 of 16 December 1993.

2. The number of meetings during the regular session of the First Committee should be recommended by the members of the incoming Bureau of the First Committee after consultations with delegations and the Secretariat, taking into account:

(a) The requirements in terms of time and services for the First Committee to fulfil its duties;

(b) The number of meetings normally allocated to previous sessions;

(c) The degree to which the First Committee at previous sessions was able to fulfil its duties in the allocated meeting time;

(d) The degree to which the First Committee at previous sessions made full use of the allocated meeting time;

(e) Available means and resources.

3. The proceedings of the First Committee should follow a three-phased approach, the consecutive elements of which are characterized as follows:

(a) General debate (first phase):

(i) The time for the delivery of a single statement should not exceed seven minutes per delegation;

(ii) Statements on behalf of more than one delegation should not exceed twelve minutes;

(iii) More extensive and detailed contributions to the general debate may be tabled in written form and will be considered as if they were read out orally. They will be reflected in the records of the First Committee without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly;

(iv) The floor should be given to the speakers on the basis of a consecutive list of speakers to the extent possible in order to complete the general debate at the earliest possible stage;

(b) Discussion of specific items under consideration in the First Committee (second phase):

(i) The meetings should be held in an informal mode but with appropriate conference services;

(ii) The discussion should be structured according to broad topic areas in line with paragraph 2 of resolution 48/87, taking into consideration the fact that meetings for discussion of different topics should not overlap;

(iii) Based on consultations and the outcome of the previous session of the First Committee, the Chairman of the First Committee, in cooperation with its Bureau and the Secretariat, should submit an indicative list of key questions to be addressed within each of the major topic areas;

(c) Consideration of and action on draft resolutions (third phase):

(i) The deadline for the submission of draft resolutions should only be after the end of the second phase;

(ii) The consideration of all draft resolutions should follow the same clustering in broad topic areas as was adopted for the second phase.

4. In implementing the three-phase approach outlined in paragraph 3 above, the adoption, for the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, of a programme of work of the First Committee and timetable along the lines of the illustrative example provided in the appendix to the present working paper should be considered.

5. The incoming Chairman of the First Committee should continue consultations on the further rationalization of the work and the effective functioning of the First Committee.

6. The Secretary-General should provide, taking due account of existing resource constraints, the appropriate means and resources to permit the implementation of the programme of work of the First Committee for the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

APPENDIX

Illustrative example of a programme of work and timetable

First phase

First week

Monday-Thursday (approx. 5 meetings a/)	General debate
Monday 6 p.m.	Closure of the list of speakers for the general debate

Second phase b/

Friday Second week Monday-Friday Third week Monday	Discussion of specific items in informal consultations (with appropriate conference services)
Wednesday	Deadline for submission of draft resolutions on all items

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a/ This figure may need adjustment after the closure of the list of speakers for the general debate.

b/ The overall number of meetings for the regular session of the Committee should be determined as described in paragraph 2 of the present working paper. This number should include:

One meeting for organizational questions

One meeting for the observance of Disarmament Week and the Pledging Conference for the Disarmament Information Programme

Approximately five meetings for the general debate

Approximately two meetings for rationalization and reform

The remainder of the meeting time available should be divided up between the second and third phases so that approximately two fifths should be allocated to the second phase and three fifths to the third phase.

Thursday/Friday (approx. 2 meetings)	Informal meetings on the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee

Third phase b/

Fourth week

Monday-Friday	Consideration of all draft resolutions

Fifth week

Monday	Consideration of all draft resolutions
Tuesday-Friday	Action on all draft resolutions

Sixth week

Monday-Friday (or as needed)	Action on all draft resolutions